



## OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

### PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APD DRUG TAKE BACK DAY - OCTOBER 26, 2019

Athens Police Department Taking Back Unwanted Prescription Drugs at 2 Locations

ATHENS, TENNESSEE – October 24, 2019 - This Saturday, October 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. the Athens Police Department and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration will give the public its 18th opportunity in nine years to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused and unwanted prescription drugs. Bring your pills for disposal to the Athens Police Department at 815 North Jackson Street or Wal-Mart at 1815 Decatur Pike. (Sites cannot accept liquids, needles or sharps, only pills or patches.) The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked.

Last fall Americans turned in nearly 469 tons (more than 937,000 pounds) of prescription drugs at nearly 6,300 sites operated by the DEA and almost 5,000 of its state and local law enforcement partners. Overall, in its 17 previous Take Back events, DEA and its partners have taken in more than 11.8 million pounds—approximately 5,900 tons—of pills.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the United States are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Survey on Drug Use and Health shows year after year that the majority of misused and abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including someone else's medication being stolen from the home medicine cabinet. In addition, Americans are now advised that their usual methods for disposing of unused medicines—flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash—both pose potential safety and health hazards.

Chief Couch, of the Athens Police Department, said “The City of Athens has invested a great deal of resources into addressing the harmful effects that illegal and misused narcotics have on our community. Our arrests for illegal drugs go up every year, but this isn’t a problem we can arrest our way out of. This issue requires a multi-faceted approach and partnerships that address the many root issues of this problem. The Drug Take Back Day is one of many ways we can work with our community to address this pressing issue.”

Members of the community are encouraged to bring unused and unwanted prescription drugs to either of the aforementioned locations.

For more information about the disposal of prescription drugs or about the October 26 Take Back Day event, go to [www.DEATakeBack.com](http://www.DEATakeBack.com).

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